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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 003511

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: TGS CONCERNS ABOUT KIRKUK, PKK AND AFGHANISTAN

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman: Reasons: 1.4
(b) and (d).

1. (S) Ambassador met with DCHOD Ilker Basbug at latter,s request on June 21 for a tour d'horizon of current issues in the lead in to the President's visit to Ankara and the NATO Istanbul Summit. Basbug clearly wanted to make several points related to Iraq and U.S. Turkish relations.

KIRKUK

2. (S) Basbug noted that the Turks are concerned about developments around Kirkuk as the June 30 transfer of sovereignty approaches. They have received numerous reports from both open source and intelligence that Kurds are planning activities to change the ethnic composition and balances of the city. For Turkey, he said, this is a major issue that affects Turkish national interest. He noted that Foreign Minister Gul had made a public statement (following a meeting with the Iraqi Turkoman Front leader) outlining Turkish concerns earlier in the day. Kurdish ambitions are to take over Kirkuk. If they succeed it will be the first step in creation of an independent Kurdish state. Turkey cannot merely watch such a situation develop. Kurdish groups justify their rights to Kirkuk under the TAL by reference to the small part of the province that was under their control as of March 19, 2003, he added. Other parts of the TAL give Kirkuk and Baghdad special status to be determined later, the Kurds can't have it both ways, insisting on their rights in the TAL but ignoring other parts of the document. No one should make a judgment that Turkey would stand idle in the face of such steps. Basbug worried that there could be tragic miscalculations leading to terrible consequences.

3. (S) The Ambassador indicated we had warned the Kurds repeatedly about the potential explosiveness of the situation in Kirkuk and the need to proceed to resolve the grave injustices that had been carried out there in an ordered, fair and transparent manner. And that they would need to consider their relations with Turkey, the impact on their relations with the U.S. and the internal impact on their reliance on the TAL. Furthermore, he encouraged Basbug to take advantage of the upcoming contacts with Kurdish leaders (Talabani arrived the same day and Barzani may be in Ankara in the coming weeks) to make sure Turkish views are understood.

PKK

4. (S) Basbug said he didn't want to go into the issue of PKK in Iraq since it represented a frustrating subject in relations with the U.S. which the military wanted to develop, not harm. He wondered why the U.S. had not taken further action, not a major military action, but clear signs of political intent. However, he noted that there has been a clear increase of PKK/Kongra Gel activity in southern Turkey. Twenty servicemen and up to eight village guards have been killed in the last two months. He said it would be complicated to explain the many influences that led to this upsurge. But he thought in addition to the domestic Turkish developments and the divisions within the PKK leadership (he asked whether the U.S. was in contact with Osman Ocalan), there was a link with the developments in northern Iraq, particularly Kurdish intentions in Kirkuk. Someone, he said, was encouraging the PKK to leave Iraq for Turkey; there were now double or triple the number of militants in Turkey that there had been last year (he cited a number of 1500). It was difficult to see the aims of the renewed violence. Turkey's military could deal with the increased terrorism, but boys were dying as a result. MG Kalyoncu noted that the PKK was important for our overall relationship. When leaders wanted to work together with allies in the future, it would be necessary to demonstrate what their cooperation had accomplished.

5. (S) The Ambassador pointed out the range of steps the U.S. had taken against the PKK/Kongra Gel: our designation, the EU's identification of the group as terrorists, engagement with Iraqi officials on the nature of PKK/Kongra Gel which led to Iraqi FM Zebari's statements condemning them at the OIC meeting. Furthermore, the Ambassador noted that we had offered SRO assets to gather intelligence, but had heard that the MFA had concerns about the impact on relations

with Iran or Syria. (Basbug confirmed the TGS had similar concerns as well as a negative reaction to the statement that the data could not be used for "unilateral" operations in Iraq.) He noted that we would have to continue to work together, within the limits of circumstances and developments, on the issue of the PKK/Kongra Gel terrorists.

AFGHANISTAN

16. (S) In reviewing the elements of the President's upcoming visit and the agenda for the NATO summit, the Ambassador thanked General Basbug for Turkey's willingness to deploy the HRF in Istanbul for command of ISAF in February 2005. Basbug noted there was one condition, that the follow on force (identified in the SHAPE informal rotation plan as Italian) be fully agreed and committed before the Turks deployed. They didn't want another deployment that stretched months beyond its original intent as occurred when they commanded ISAF 2.

17. (U) Baghdad and Kabul minimize considered.
EDELMAN